

American Indian Settlements in North America

SOL 3b - The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by locating where the American Indians lived, with emphasis on the Arctic (Inuit), Northwest (Kwakiutl), Plains (Lakota), Southwest (Pueblo), and Eastern Woodlands (Iroquois).

Long before the first Europeans arrived, American Indians were scattered across the eight geographic regions of North America. Some of these Indians included the Inuit, the Kwakiutl, the Lakota, the Pueblo, and the Iroquois. Let's investigate where and how these Indians lived!

The **Inuit** Indians lived in northern Canada and Alaska. This area is one of the coldest regions of the world where temperatures are below freezing much of the year. The land is often snow-covered. The Inuit Indians used all of the resources from this frozen environment to meet their basic needs. Their lives depended on getting food from caribou, seals, and fish. Although these animals were their main source of food, they were also used for clothing and shelter. Their homes were often simple lean toos made out of animal skins and plant materials or igloo structures made out of ice and snow. Their clothing was made out of animal skins and fur and included such garments as hooded jackets, pants, and boots.

The **Kwakiutl** Indians lived along the Pacific Northwest Coast in the Coastal Range Region of North America. The climate in this area is surprisingly mild but also rainy. As much as 100 inches of rain can fall each year! The land in this area is covered by vast forests of giant cedar trees and abundant rivers, streams and springs. The Kwakiutl Indians used all of the resources from this rich environment to meet their basic needs. The men hunted deer and moose in the forests, but their main source of food was fish and seals from the rivers, streams, and ocean. The women gathered shellfish and berries to add to their diet. Many Kwakiutls lived in plank houses. Plank houses were similar to the longhouse except they were taller. These plank houses were constructed of cedar wood. Several families usually lived in each house. Large canoes, used to fish and travel by water, were also made using the huge cedar trees nearby. The Kwakiutl also used the cedar wood to build totem poles that told their history of their clan (family). Their clothing was made using animal skins and furs, but surprisingly, they also made many articles of clothing like skirts, capes, and hoods from the bark of the cedar trees.



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The **Lakota** Indians lived in the Great Plains region of North America. This region has hot summers and long, cold winters with very little rainfall. The land is covered by huge areas of grasslands. The Lakota Indians used all of the resources from this dry environment to meet their basic needs. For food, they hunted buffalo and antelope, grew crops such as maize, beans, and pumpkins, and gathered wild berries and fruits. Their homes included teepees made of buffalo skins held up by wooden poles and domed-shaped lodges covered by earth or grass. The Lakota made much of their clothing from the skin of deer and antelope. Men wore animal skin leggings and buffalo furs over their shoulders while women wore dresses made of deerskin. On their feet they wore animal skin moccasins.

The **Pueblo** Indians lived mainly in the southern Basin and Range region of North America, in the present-day states of New Mexico and Arizona. The climate of this area is hot and dry. The land is covered by desert areas, bordering cliffs, and mountains. The Pueblo Indians used all of the resources from this hot, dry environment to meet their basic needs. The men hunted wild animals like deer, rabbits, antelope and bear for food, while women and children collected wild berries. The Pueblo also farmed. They raised corn, beans, and squash. Their homes were built out of a mixture of sun-dried earth and straw called adobe. Many of their pueblos, or villages, were located on the flat tops of mesas, which were elevated areas of land with a flat top, or in natural caves located on the steep sides of canyon walls. The clothes of the Pueblos were made of leather, fur, and cotton. They were one of the few Indian groups who knew how to grow cotton and weave it into cloth.

The **Iroquois** Indians lived in the northeastern part of North America called the Eastern Woodland. This area is covered by thick forests, mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, and streams. It has cold winters with snow and warm summers with plenty of rain. The Iroquois Indians used all of the resources from their environment to meet their basic needs. They hunted deer and black bear, fished, grew corn, beans, and squash, and gathered nuts and berries. Their homes were called longhouses and were made of bent wooden poles and sheets of elm tree bark. Each longhouse could hold four or five families. They made most of their clothing from deerskin including long skirts, vests, leggings, and moccasins.

